

the nays are 0. Two-thirds of the Senators present having voted in the affirmative, the resolution of ratification is agreed to.

The Resolution of Advice and Consent to Accession is as follows:

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein), The Senate advises and consents to the accession to the Protocol of Amendment to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (the "Protocol") done at Brussels on June 26, 1999 (Treaty Doc. 108-6), including Specific Annexes A, B, C, D, E, and G; Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of Specific Annex F; and Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of Specific Annex J; subject to the reservations to certain Recommended Practices (as set forth in the enclosure to the report of the Secretary of State in Treaty Doc. 108-6) in Specific Annex A, Chapters 1 and 2; Specific Annex B, Chapters 2 and 3; Specific Annex D, Chapters 1 and 2; Specific Annex E, Chapters 1 and 2; Specific Annex F, Chapters 1 and 2; Specific Annex G, Chapter 1; and Specific Annex J, Chapter 4.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table, and the President will be notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Montana.

EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE RELIEF ACT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would like to speak a few moments about the need for health care assistance to Katrina-related victims. When I finish, I am then going to join with Senator GRASSLEY, the chairman of the Finance Committee, in a unanimous consent request, and that is bring up and pass the bill.

Tina Eagerton fled Louisiana for Clearwater, FL, to escape Hurricane Katrina. As Tampa Bay's 10 News reported, Tina is 7 months pregnant. She has a high-risk pregnancy. Plainly she needs a doctor's care, but Tina could not find a Florida doctor who would accept her Louisiana Medicaid card. She said, "I've called some doctors, [but they say] 'We don't know what to do.' I guess nobody has gotten the memo."

Congress needs to get the memo. We need to pass S. 1716, the Emergency Health Care Relief Act, and we need to do it today.

The last 4 weeks, we have seen terrible destruction, destruction that Katrina wrought as well as Rita has wrought; more than 1,000 people are

dead, a million people displaced, hundreds of billions of dollars of damage. I went down there to the gulf to see it myself, and I must say it is worse than the pictures.

Katrina has exposed deep problems that plague American society: chronic poverty, stark inequality, strained race relations. We could not solve all of these problems today, but some are so pervasive, so severe, that a single bill cannot remedy them. It requires a sustained national debate and reexamination of what we as a nation hold dear.

We cannot fix everything today, but we can fix some things today. One thing we can fix is a lack of health coverage for tens of thousands of Katrina survivors. We can and must pass the Emergency Health Care Relief Act today.

This broadly supported legislation would provide victims of Hurricane Katrina with the health care services they urgently need. As we so often do, Chairman GRASSLEY and I worked together on this bill. We worked together on the Katrina tax package which the President signed Friday and which is even now putting cash in the hands of Katrina victims.

And we worked together on this health bill as well. We spent a lot of time together—our staffers—consulting with Senators, especially with Senators in related States.

Our health bill would provide temporary Medicaid coverage for Katrina survivors, available through a streamlined application. It is that simple. These benefits would be available right away. Those eligible would get coverage for up to 5 months, with a possible extension of 5 months.

Pregnant women such as Tina Eagerton, as well as children, would be eligible for health care at higher income levels.

To support those who lost their jobs and income, our bill allows those individuals to keep their current coverage with assistance from the Federal Government. And our bill would set up a fund to help health care providers deal with their tremendous uncompensated care losses—health care, hospitals, specialists. These funds would go to providers who experienced a surge in patient load from the evacuation of Katrina victims. These funds would go to those facilities that no longer have the patient base to make ends meet.

But this is not just health care providers who are incurring uncompensated care expenses. States are as well. Texas has taken in 200,000 Katrina evacuees. Katrina is adding \$30 million a month in costs to the Texas Medicaid Program.

Our legislation provides Texas—and other States caring for Katrina evacuees—with the full Federal Medicaid funding for those evacuees.

The bill would also cover all the costs of Louisiana's and Mississippi's Medicaid and child health programs for 2006, with the same treatment being provided to a number of particularly ravaged counties in Alabama.

This legislation would give solid help to those who receive TANF and unemployment insurance.

In short, our bill does a great deal to help Katrina victims in commonsense ways.

As a result, our bill has broad support from consumer, health care, and business groups. Here is what some of the groups have to say about our bill.

The American Red Cross says:

As our nation faces the challenging task of ensuring that the victims of Hurricane Katrina receive the care, compassion, and support needed to reconstruct their lives, legislation such as yours helps to ensure their health care needs will be met.

The American Hospital Association says of our bill:

[It] is an important first step toward getting assistance to the thousands of people who have been affected by the storm, as well as those who are providing their care.

The National Governors Association says:

The Nation's Governors are very supportive of your relief package. [The] additional investments in Medicaid and TANF that your relief package provide will be critical to help these individuals put their lives back together and regain some sense of stability.

Congress has taken some steps to respond to the Katrina disaster. We have passed more than \$60 billion in funding for FEMA. We have passed Katrina-targeted tax relief. These bills are helping us in what may be the biggest relief operation for a natural disaster in American history.

But we also must do more to help the victims of this natural—and national—disaster. We must provide Katrina victims with access to health care—not done in part of the legislation—and we must do it now.

Americans have responded generously. Americans have given of their time, through the efforts of tens of thousands of volunteers.

Americans have opened their homes. Web sites report offers for shelter totaling nearly 270,000 beds. And Americans have opened their wallets in an unprecedented fashion. In the 3 weeks following the hurricane, Americans contributed more than \$1.2 billion to help victims.

But individual citizens can do only so much. At some point Congress needs to help. We need to help people such as Rosalind Breau. Of Rosalind Breau, the Chicago Tribune reported:

Diagnosed with colon cancer on May 1, Ms. Breau was scheduled for her third round of Chemotherapy on August 31, a day after flooding began to wreck New Orleans and Charity Hospital where she had been receiving care. Breau and her family ended up settling temporarily in Baton Rouge. Nauseated with constant fatigue, profound weakness and frequent pain, Breau has been trying to survive the stress of her situation as best she could. Meanwhile, her husband, a policeman at Charity Hospital, has lost his job and there are questions about whether his insurance will pay for her care. "It's been so frustrating not knowing what's going to happen," she said. "I just pray I can make it through this."